



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

CITY OF SEATTLE ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number: 2306587
Applicant Name: Mahlum Architects, for the Northwest School
Address of Proposal: 1415 Summit Avenue

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Master Use Permit for future construction of an 11,216 sq. ft. two-story and basement addition/renovation to existing private school (Northwest School) for a total of 59,156 sq. ft. no change to existing parking. Project includes future demolition of a portion of the existing building under separate permit.

The following approvals are required:

SEPA - Environmental Determination
(Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code (SMC))

Administrative Conditional Use Permit - to allow an institution other than public schools not meeting development standards in an MR zone. (Seattle Municipal Code 23.45.122)



SEPA DETERMINATION ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☒ DNS with conditions -

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

* Early DNS October 23, 2003

BACKGROUND DATA

Property & Area Characteristics

The school is located in the Capitol Hill and is bounded by Summit Avenue to the east, East Union to the south, and Crawford Place to the west. Immediately north of the property are two older buildings, which front on East Pike Street. The parcel is 30,054 square feet and is zoned Midrise (MR) multi-family residential.

The entire site is zoned Midrise; halfway down the block-faces of Summit and Crawford Place the zoning changes to Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-65). The southern half of East Pike Street is zoned High Rise (HR), except for a strip directly south of the subject property, which is a Major Institution Overlay District/High-Rise (MIO-160-HR) zone. The surrounding fabric of the neighborhood is primarily multi-story, multi-family structures, with a rim of older masonry commercial structures along East Pike to the north. Parking lots are located to the east and the northwest of the school. On-street parking is restricted at the perimeter of the school.

Proposal

The proposal is to demolish the 1920s dance studio/play court addition on the north side of the building and construct a two-story (with basement) 11,216 square foot addition containing a dance studio, two classrooms and a library. The intent of the project is allowing teachers to have their own classroom space, so they may be available for students throughout the day. There will be no increase in staff or students. An existing outdoor storage area is also proposed to be enclosed, along with a renovation and interior upgrades to the main building.

The addition abuts the north, east and west property lines. The basement level is approximately 4,248 square feet of classroom, restroom, maintenance room, dance studio and circulation.

Institutions such as the proposed private school are allowed outright if they meet the development standards of Code sections 23.45.092 through 23.45.102 (SMC 23.45.090). The existing building and proposed addition comply with some, but not all of the development standards as follows:

Table A:

Development Standard	Required	Existing	Proposed
Structure width (23.45.094)	150' maximum	213'	213'
Structure depth (23.45.094)	65% max (78.2' allowed)	119.58	99% (119.58')
Institution Setbacks (23.45.096)			
Front Setbacks*	Average or 20'	0'	0'
Side Setback:	5' at north lot line	0'	0'

Since the proposed project varies from the development standards for institutions in multifamily zones, the proposed private school addition is not allowed outright. The project is required to obtain an Administrative Conditional Use permit to modify development standards.

* The lot is considered to be a “through” lot; therefore the setbacks at Summit Avenue and Crawford Place are both front setbacks.

Landmark Preservation Board

Originally constructed in 1905 by the Seattle School District, the building served as a public school until the mid 1960s. The Northwest School purchased the building in 1980 and in 1988 the building was designated landmark status by the City of Seattle. Because The Northwest School is proposing both an addition and alterations to the building, the Department of Neighborhoods, Landmark Preservation Board must issue a Certificate of Approval. The Architectural Review Committee met on June 25, 2004 in which the members responded positively to the project and did not identify any outstanding landmarks concerns. A Landmark Board approval of the Certificate of Approval must occur after this SEPA determination.

Public Comment

Four comment letters were received during the public comment period, which ended on November 3, 2003. Comments included concerns about the extent of the demolition (fear that the school would be demolished) and view obstruction.

ANALYSIS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

Section 23.45.122 of the Seattle Municipal Code provides that institutions which do not meet the development standards established in SMC 23.45.090 and outlined above may be permitted as an administrative conditional use subject to the requirements and conditioning considerations of the Section. The applicable criteria will be discussed below.

- A. *Bulk and Siting. In order to accommodate the special needs of the proposed institution, and to better site the facility with respect to its surroundings, the Director may modify the applicable development standards for modulation, landscaping, provision of open space, and structure width, depth and setbacks. In determining whether to allow such modifications, the Director shall balance the needs of the institution against the compatibility of the proposed institution with the residential scale and character of the surrounding area.*

The applicant requests modifications to City Land Use Code regulations governing structure width, depth and setbacks. The proposed project does not increase the structure width or depth of the existing building; the proposal maintains existing structure and depth. The proposed addition maintains an existing intrusion into the north side setback.

As the school strives to provide for their students and staff, they are subject to space constraints in an urban environment. The scale and character of the surrounding area is mostly medium to large scale residential apartment buildings. The Midrise zone allows for fairly dense, 60 foot high buildings. The proposed addition would replace an existing section of approximately the same scale. The new addition provides an appropriate transition between the existing school and the adjacent commercial buildings to the north, which are a part of the low to mid-scale, dense commercial corridor along East Pike Street.

The project proposes to enclose an existing outdoor storage area; to house necessary equipment for the students using the adjacent playground across Crawford Place. The enclosure would result in a minor increase in bulk, but would be a continuation of the existing architectural rhythm of the building.

B. Dispersion Criterion

The proposed addition will provide the teachers and students with better functioning spaces, without increasing the number of students or staff. The boundaries of the site are not expanding; therefore, this criterion does not apply.

C. Noise.

The Director may condition the permit in order to mitigate potential noise problems. Measures to be used by the Director for this purpose include, but are not limited to the following: landscaping, sound barriers or fences, mounding or berming, adjustments to yards or the location of refuse storage areas, or parking development standards, design modification and fixing of hours for use of areas.

Project drawings indicate that mechanical equipment, such as HVAC, will be located within the building. It is not anticipated that the addition will impact the surrounding properties with regard to noise; no long term noise problems associated with the uses are anticipated to occur as a result of the addition.

D. Transportation Plan.

A transportation plan shall be required for proposed new institutions and for those institutions proposing expansions which are larger than four thousand (4,000) square feet of structure are and/or required to provide twenty (20) or more parking spaces.

The transportation study is by Heffron Transportation, Inc. The Northwest School currently enrolls approximately 425 students and employs about 90 faculty/staff at the main building. No increases in student enrollment or staff are anticipated for the project.

The main school building generates 760 vehicle trips per day. Approximately 310 trips occur in the AM peak hour, 245 trips occur in the school PM hour and 65 trips occur in the commuter PM peak hour. The main school building generates a parking demand of 81 vehicles on an average day. The highest on-street utilization occurs in the evening. Special events occur at the school, this project will not affect the size or frequency of the events.

Because the project will not result in an increase in students or staff, mitigation is not warranted.

Public Welfare and Injury to Property in Vicinity

General provisions for conditional uses in multi-family zones (SMC 23.45.116) provide that a use may be approved, conditioned or denied based upon whether it meets the specific criteria set forth for the use and also “whether the use will be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property in the zone or vicinity in which the property is located.”

The existing use has been operating as a school at this site for many years. The addition will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property in the zone or vicinity.

DECISION - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

Based on the information provided and analysis performed, and the Departments experience with similar cases, the ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE is **GRANTED**.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated September 15, 2003 and annotated by the Department. The information in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 23.05.665) discusses the relationship between the City's code/policies and environmental review. The Overview Policy states, in part, "Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation". The Policies also discuss in SMC 23.05.665 D1-7, that in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to deny or mitigate a project based on adverse environmental impacts. This may be specified otherwise in the policies for specific elements of the environment found in SMC 25.05.675. In consideration of these policies, a more detailed discussion of some of the potential impacts is appropriate.

Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulate from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during grading, excavation, and general site work; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified construction related impacts. Specifically these are: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (grading, site excavation and soil erosion); Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, removal of debris, and obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way). Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts, but impacts such as air quality and noise require further discussion and may require SEPA mitigation.

Noise Impacts

Noise associated with construction of the building could adversely affect surrounding uses in the area, which include residential and commercial uses. Surrounding uses are likely to be adversely impacted by noise throughout the duration of construction activities. Due to the proximity of the

project site to these residential uses, the limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be inadequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts. Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC.25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B), mitigation is warranted.

Grading, delivery and pouring of concrete and similar noisy activities will be prohibited on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, the hours of construction activity shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature. This condition may also be modified to permit low-noise exterior work (e.g., installation of landscaping) after approval from DPD.

Air Quality

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and will require permits for removal of asbestos (if any) during demolition. The owner and/or responsible party (ies) are required to comply with the PSCAA rules pertaining to demolition of projects with or without asbestos. This will ensure proper handling and disposal of asbestos, as well as demolition of structures without asbestos. No further SEPA conditioning is necessary.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area and increased demand for parking; increased demand for public services and utilities; and increased light and glare; increased energy demand; increased ambient noise associated with increased human activity and vehicular movement.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site detention of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; the Seattle Building Code which provides prescriptive construction techniques and standards; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long term long term impacts, although some impacts warrant further discussion and possible mitigation.

Height, Bulk and Scale

The project is located in a Midrise zone which allows a maximum height of 60 feet. The proposed addition will reach a maximum height of about 26.5 feet which is substantially less than the zone height limit. The bulk of the building will exceed code standards for structure width and depth and modulation. However, the building and its addition will share a park-like setting with the adjacent community center, park and civic plaza. The neighborhood's height, bulk and scale impacts are discussed in further detail in the Administrative Conditional Use analysis. No further conditioning is required through SEPA.

Parking

Refer to the transportation discussion under the Administrative Conditional Use analysis in this report. No increase is expected, therefore no impact on parking in the neighborhood. No SEPA conditioning is required.

Historic Preservation

The Northwest School is a City of Seattle historic landmark and is protected by the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance which is administered by the Landmark Preservation Board. SEPA policy (SMC 25.05.675H) states that, “*For projects involving structures or sites which have been designated as historic landmarks, compliance with the Landmark Preservation Ordinance shall constitute compliance with the policy in subsection H2a above*”. Subsection H2a is the SEPA policy for Historic Preservation. The Board has reviewed the addition to the building through the certificate of approval process pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance. To ensure compatibility and to protect the historic school, The Northwest School shall be required to obtain a Certificate of Approval for the addition prior to the issuance of the Master Use Permit.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.

CONDITIONS –SEPA

Prior to Issuance of Master Use Permit

1. Submit a Certificate of Approval from the Department of Neighborhoods.

During Construction

The following condition(s) to be enforced during construction shall be posted at the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. If more than one street abuts the site, conditions shall be posted at each street. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other waterproofing material and shall remain posted on-site for the duration of the construction.

2. Grading, delivery and pouring of concrete and similar noisy activities will be prohibited on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby residences, only the low noise impact work such as that listed below, will be permitted on Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M:
 - A. Surveying and layout.
 - B. Other ancillary tasks to construction activities will include site security, surveillance, monitoring, and maintenance of weather protecting, water dams and heating equipment.
3. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, all other construction activities shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between 7:30 A.M and 6:00 P.M.

Hours may be extended and/or specific types of construction activities may be permitted on a case by case basis by approval of the Land Use Planner prior to each occurrence.

Once the foundation work is completed and the structure is enclosed, interior construction may be done in compliance with the Noise Ordinance and would not be subject to the additional noise mitigating conditions.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: July 12, 2004

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Land Use Services

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